



4 FOOD PACKAGE/DRAFT ISSUANCE

Effective 3/1/98

4.21 Children/Women with Special Needs Food Packages

Revised: 4/1/03

POLICY: Children and women with special dietary needs may receive a WIC-approved formula or medical food, in a *special needs* food package, when the physician determines that the participant has a medical condition that precludes or restricts the use of conventional foods, and when a project RD approves. If the prescribed formula is not available at a WIC-approved grocery store or pharmacy, a WIC-approved pharmacy is required to order it.

PROCEDURE:

A. SPECIAL NEEDS PACKAGES

The Special Needs packages contain 36 oz cereal, 3 cans juice, and two different quantities of special formulas or medical food. Most women and children with special needs will receive 403 fl oz concentrate, 8 lbs powdered, or 806 oz ready-to-feed, though an additional 52 fl oz concentrate, 1 lb powdered, or 104 fl oz ready-to-feed may be issued if the CPA determines there is a need. These packages contain no eggs, peanut butter, or dry beans and peas. See the Food Package Tailoring/Selection Charts, Women and Children with Special Needs section (see the attachment in Policy 4.10). Children generally continue on formula (from infancy) because of cow milk sensitivity, medical problems such as severe or multiple food allergies, cystic fibrosis, etc. Women generally receive a medical food (e.g., Ensure or Boost) due to conditions such as hyperemesis gravidarum.

B. DETERMINATION OF NEED

1. Determine if a formula or medical food has been prescribed and determine the need for it.
 - a) Determine if a formula or medical food has been prescribed and the medical condition/need for which it has been prescribed through discussion with the participant/parent/caregiver; the Child or appropriate women's Questionnaire; a written prescription, if available; and/or referral information (e.g., WIC Medical Referral Form, see Attachment to Policy 2.8 Medical Data from Outside Sources). If verification is necessary, contact the physician's office. If the request is for low-iron or ready-to-feed formulas, see Policies 4.17 and 4.18, respectively.
 - b) Different types of formulas or medical foods may be combined in a food package (e.g., half regular formula, half special formula; see Policy 4.10, D.).



- c) Determine if the participant can consume some milk and other WIC foods (eggs, peanut butter and dry beans and peas). In some cases, it may be more feasible to issue a regular package or to alternate regular and special packages. (See part C.2.a).
2. Determine the intended length of use through discussion with the participant/parent/caregiver, prescription or referral information, or the appropriate Questionnaire. If verification is necessary, contact the physician's office.

C. FOOD PACKAGE SELECTION

1. Identify the package(s) with the appropriate formula or medical food/liquid nutrition product.
2. Identify the appropriate quantity.
 - a) If the participant does not need the full quantity of a formula or medical food and can consume other WIC foods, compare the regular food packages to the special needs packages. It may be more economically feasible for the participant to purchase the special needs product on their own (or to request coverage via HealthCheck Other Services) and receive a regular food package from WIC. Or, regular and special needs food packages can be alternated month-to-month to accommodate participant needs. Combining foods from regular child or woman packages and special needs packages into new food packages is NOT allowed.
 - b) There are two different levels of formula quantity in the special needs packages. The food packages in the "extra formula" column on the chart for "Infants and Women & Children with Special Needs Packages" may be issued when the CPA determines that the participant needs this higher quantity (e.g., via review of the 24-hour food record, physician's prescription).

D. APPROVALS and DOCUMENTATION

1. RD approval and medical documentation are required as delineated in Policy 4.10.
2. RD approval and medical documentation must be retained in the participant's file.
3. If a participant is to be issued the maximum amount of formula or medical food (i.e., the food packages in the "extra formula" column on the chart for "Infants and Women & Children with Special Needs Package"), the rationale must be documented and retained in the participant's file.



E. AVAILABILITY FOR PURCHASE

1. A number of the more typically issued special formulas or medical foods are available at WIC-approved grocery stores.
2. If the prescribed formula is not available at a WIC-approved grocery store, the participant needs to purchase the formula at a WIC-approved pharmacy. If availability at a pharmacy is uncertain, either the participant or the Project needs to call the pharmacy before shopping to assure the formula is available. If the pharmacy does not stock the formula, they are required by their agreement with the WIC Program to order it for the participant.

F. REASSESSMENT

1. The need for the formula or medical food must be reassessed and documented at the next certification and when the intended length of use expires.
2. At a minimum, a new prescription is required when the physician's intended length of use expires. Professional judgment should be used regarding whether or not to contact the physician's office for verification of the prescription or the intended length of use. The Project may require a new prescription at each certification, if appropriate.